

**What is Claimed is:**

1. A method of detecting fixer on a print media comprising the steps of:
  - (i) using a fixer printhead comprising a plurality of fixer nozzles to apply fixer in a plurality of spaced parallel lines to a region of the media, each line being applied by a respective fixer nozzle;
  - (ii) before or after the application of the fixer, applying ink to said region of the media whereby the locations where both fixer and ink are present are optically distinguishable from the locations where only ink is present; and
  - (iii) optically detecting the predetermined pattern.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the parallel lines are arranged in columns, immediately adjacent nozzles being arranged to print lines in adjacent columns and immediately adjacent lines in the same column being arranged to be printed by nozzles which are separated by  $n$  further nozzles, wherein  $n$  is an integer.
3. A method according to claim 2, wherein  $n$  is 3.
4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the period is selected such that bleeding of the fixer and ink substantially does not occur.
5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the steps of applying fixer and ink to said region occur within a period of thirty seconds or less.

6. A method according to claim 5, wherein the period is selected such that bleeding of the fixer and ink substantially does not occur.
7. A method according to claim 1, wherein the ink and fixer are applied to the media in an ink/fixer ratio between 2 to 1 and 1 to 2 by volume.
8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the ink is magenta coloured ink and the media is glossy.
9. A method according to claim 1, wherein the ink is black and the media is plain or bond.
10. A method of detecting fixer on a print media comprising the steps of:
  - (i) applying fixer in a predetermined pattern to a region of the media;
  - (ii) before or after the application of the fixer, applying ink to said region of the media whereby the locations where both fixer and ink are present are optically distinguishable from the locations where only ink is present; and
  - (iii) optically detecting the predetermined pattern, wherein said steps (i) and (ii) occur within a period such that bleeding of the fixer and ink substantially does not occur.
11. A method according to claim 10, wherein said steps (i) and (ii) occur within a period of thirty seconds or less.

12. A method according to claim 10, wherein the ink is magenta coloured ink and the media is glossy.
13. A method according to claim 10, wherein the ink is black and the media is plain or bond.
14. An apparatus for detecting fixer on a print media comprising a fixer printhead, said printhead comprising a plurality of fixer nozzles and being arranged to apply fixer in a plurality of spaced parallel lines to a region of a print media, each line being applied by a respective fixer nozzle, an ink printhead, said ink printhead being arranged to over- or under-print ink on said region of the media, and an optical detector, said optical detector being arranged to optically detect said parallel lines.
15. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said ink printhead comprises a plurality of ink nozzles, and wherein a common optical detector is used to check the operation of said fixer nozzles and said ink nozzles.
16. An apparatus according to claim 14, comprising a processor, said processor being connected to the optical detector and being arranged to check whether individual fixer nozzles are functioning correctly.
17. An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said ink printhead comprises a plurality of ink nozzles, and wherein a common processor is used to check the operation of said fixer nozzles and said ink nozzles.

18. An apparatus according to claim 14, comprising a processor, said processor being connected to the optical detector and being arranged to check whether a fixer printhead is correctly aligned.
19. An apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said ink printhead comprises a plurality of ink nozzles, and wherein a common processor is used to check the alignment of said fixer nozzles and said ink nozzles.
20. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the optical detector is a line detector.